

Victoria Gasca

West Hartford, CT 06110

RE: Testimony in Support of HB 5707- Proper Dog Sheltering

Dear Honorable Member of the Environment Committee,

As a constituent, I urge you to support and joint favorably report HB 5707; "To require state and private colleges and universities that use cats or dogs in laboratory research or testing to offer such cats or dogs for adoption by animal rescue organizations after such testing and to **establish standards for the provision of proper shelter to dogs.**" I am testifying to Section 2 of the bill, proper dog sheltering.

I live in West Hartford and for the most of part it is rare to see a canine companion tethered or kept confined outside most of the day. I believe if a person has a dog its primary shelter should be that of the home itself. Dogs like to go outside and have space to play and roam especially when it is nice weather. I have a spacious yard that is fenced so that my dog may choose to go outside and come back inside when she pleases, without the need of a leash or other types of tether.

I cannot say the same for my neighbor's dog across the creek. When I was a little girl my neighbors got a dog about the same time as my family. It was kept tethered most of the day as their yard did not have a fence. Then one day I saw they were putting up a fence, at least that is what I thought. Instead, to my horror, they had built a cage with a concrete floor.

I do not know what happened to the initial dog, whom I remember was the most sweetest and gentle of Dobermans, as I encountered him on a walk one day. What I do remember is hearing his howls and his cries during the day and night. His "home" was this cage, and in it a little dog house, which for a Doberman was tiny. Like I said, I do not know what happened to the dog, what I do know is that these people have gotten multiple dogs through the years and they are always thrown in this cage; left to fend for themselves in harsh environments.

One day, as a teenager I called animal control, and I explained to them that my neighbor's dog would not stop barking and howling because it is confined to a cage all day and night. He paces from one side to the other, like an animal going mad. They asked me, "Does he have access to water? Is there some type of shelter he can go in?" Yes and yes, I had to tell them, but it is not a proper home for the size of this dog. Animal Control could not do anything about it.

I urge you to pass this bill because Section 2 part (c) "No person shall confine a dog in any cage or any other structure unless such structure constitutes a proper shelter" hits close to my heart. Ever since, I was a little girl I have seen these poor dogs left outside in the rain, freezing cold and blistering heat, without anyone being able to do anything about it.

To this day that cage stands. In it a dog that starts happy and full of life then turns into what I can only describe as deranged and depressed. That is no life for a dog. If it were left to me, I would not allow these people to ever have animals again. I cannot understand why they insist on getting dogs when all they are going to do is leave them by themselves with no positive stimulation or companionship.

This bill will at least give me some kind of peace of mind as they would have to adhere to "reasonably humane" sheltering of dogs. For example, adequate insulation, containing sufficient space for a dog to fully stand and stretch, and a floor that is not too cold or too hot based on the season.

It has been 16 years that my family and I have had to endure these poor animals suffering. 16 years that I wish I could knock on my neighbor's door and say "this is against our state law and you will have to face the consequences for not providing proper shelter to those creatures."

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Victoria Gasca